



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/043,440	01/10/2002	Costas D. Maranas	P05468US1	1336

27407

7590

07/07/2008

MCKEE, VOORHEES & SEASE, P.L.C.

ATTN: PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

801 GRAND AVENUE, SUITE 3200

DES MOINES, IA 50309-2721

EXAMINER

CLOW, LORI A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1631

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/07/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/043,440

Applicant(s)

MARANAS ET AL.

Examiner

Lori A. Clow, Ph.D.

Art Unit

1631

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 March 2008.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10-16, 19-27 and 30-33 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10-16, 19-27, and 30-33 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/808)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Applicants' response, filed 26 March 2008, has been fully considered. Rejections and/or objections not reiterated from previous office actions are hereby withdrawn. The following rejections and/or objections are either reiterated or newly applied. They constitute the complete set presently being applied to the instant application.

Claims 1-8, 10-16, 19-27, and 30-33 are currently pending. Claims 9, 17, 18, 28, and 29 have been cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 1-8, 10-16, 19-27, and 30-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claims 1, 6, 23, 30, and 34 are drawn to a method for modeling cellular metabolism of an organism comprising steps that do not include a physical transformation of matter. This rejection is being re-applied based upon as emphasized by the New Interim Guidelines which state that the claims will be evaluated for providing a practical application. A practical application is claimed if the claimed invention **physically transforms** an article or physical object to a different state or thing, or if the claimed invention otherwise **produces a concrete, tangible, and useful result**. In the instant case, a physical transformation of matter is not provided, as the instant claims merely encompass non-physical (i.e. *in-silico*) method steps, such

as constructing a flux balance analysis model and applying logic constraints to provide a model. None of said steps result in a physical transformation of matter.

Therefore, the claims must be evaluated for providing a practical application that produces a concrete, tangible and useful result. The focus is not on the steps taken to achieve a particular result, but rather **the final result** achieved by the claimed invention. A claim may be statutory where it recites a result that is concrete (i.e. reproducible), tangible (i.e. communicated to a user), and useful (i.e. a specific and substantial). In the instant case, the claims do not recite a tangible result such that it is useful to one skilled in the art. The step of “applying logic constraints...thereby provides a model”, does not provide a tangible result that is useful to one skilled in the art, as merely providing a model does not indicate that the model is in a tangible form, as in “providing to a user” or “outputting the model to a user of display”. Rather, the instant claims could merely encompass *in silico* data manipulation. The tangible requirement does require that the claim must recite more than a 101 judicial exception, in that the process claim must set forth a practical application of that 101 judicial exception to produce a real-world result. Benson, 409 U.S. at 71-72, 175 USPQ at 676-77 (invention ineligible because no “substantial practical application.”). In the instant case, no real-world result is set forth.

Claim 19 is drawn to the “system” for modeling cellular metabolism of an organism which comprises a flux balance analysis model, a plurality of logic constraints, and commands for producing an altered flux balance analysis model. However, the “system”, as a whole, comprises a series of steps performed by the model and the constraints. The steps do not provide a concrete, tangible, and useful result of the system and therefore the “system” is considered non-statutory.

It is noted that this rejection could be overcome by amending the claims to recite that a result of the method is "displayed" or "outputted" (e.g. output to a user or a display), **provided such is supported in the specification as originally filed so as not to introduce new matter.** For an updated discussion of statutory considerations with regard to non- functional descriptive material and computer-related inventions, see the Guidelines for Patent Eligible Subject Matter in the MPEP 2106, Section IV.

It is further noted that claims 16 and 32 are drawn to "engineering a change in an organism to produce a desired metabolic outcome". However, as the instant application is drawn only to *in silico* modeling and computational representations and procedures (see introduction, page 4, pages 45 and 46 for example), the step of "engineering" is interpreted as one of *in silico* engineering, and is therefore non-statutory.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-8, 10-16, 19-27, and 30-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1, 6, 19, 23, 30, and 33 recite, "identify boundaries for available flux distributions of a metabolic network". It is unclear as to what the boundaries represent in the claim. Do the boundaries represent boundaries of cellular metabolism or boundaries of cellular performance or something else? Clarification through clearer claim language is requested.

Claims 1, 6, 19, 23, 30, and 33 recite, "wherein said logic constraints constrain a boundary for an available flux distribution". It is unclear if this "boundary" is the same as the boundaries recited previously in the claim. If not, what does this boundary represent in relation to a flux distribution? Clarification is requested.

Claims 1, 6, 19, 23, 30, and 33 recite, "improved predictive capabilities". It is unclear as to what is being predicted? Changes in metabolism, gene regulation, organism function, some other parameter? Clarification is requested.

Conclusion

No claims are allowed.

The outstanding rejections under 35 USC 102(e) over Palsson (2002/0012939) have been withdrawn in view of Applicant's arguments pertaining to the instant claim limitations of "applying logic constraints comprising a regulation matrix to the flux balance analysis model", which is not taught by Palsson.

Inquiries

Papers related to this application may be submitted to Technical Center 1600 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to Technical Center 1600 via the PTO Fax Center. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notices published in the Official Gazette, 1096 OG 30 (November 15, 1988), 1156 OG 61 (November 16, 1993), and 1157 OG 94 (December 28, 1993) (See 37 CFR § 1.6(d)). The Central Fax Center Number is (571) 273-8300.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lori A. Clow, Ph.D., whose telephone number is (571) 272-0715. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 10 am to 6:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Marjorie Moran can be reached on (571) 272-0720.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to (571) 272-0547.

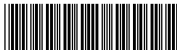
Art Unit: 1631

Patent applicants with problems or questions regarding electronic images that can be viewed in the Patent Application Information Retrieval system (PAIR) can now contact the USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center (Patent EBC) for assistance. Representatives are available to answer your questions daily from 6 am to midnight (EST). The toll free number is (866) 217-9197. When calling please have your application serial or patent number, the type of document you are having an image problem with, the number of pages and the specific nature of the problem. The Patent Electronic Business Center will notify applicants of the resolution of the problem within 5-7 business days. Applicants can also check PAIR to confirm that the problem has been corrected. The USPTO's Patent Electronic Business Center is a complete service center supporting all patent business on the Internet. The USPTO's PAIR system provides Internet-based access to patent application status and history information. It also enables applicants to view the scanned images of their own application file folder(s) as well as general patent information available to the public.

July 3, 2008

/Lori A. Clow, Ph.D./

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1631

Application Number**Application/Control No.**

10/043,440

**Applicant(s)/Patent under
Reexamination**

MARANAS ET AL.

Examiner

Lori A. Clow, Ph.D.

Art Unit

1631